

Testimony of  
**THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT**  
**(CHCACT)**

Before

the Human Services Committee

regarding Resolution 63 *Memorializing Congress To Provide Additional Support And Outreach Regarding Health Care Services Provided At Federally Qualified Health Centers.*

Presented by

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The Community Health Center Association of Connecticut has the privilege of representing thirteen of the fourteen Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) in Connecticut. FQHCs provide critical access to and high quality primary care and preventive services to patients in underserved areas of our state regardless of ability to pay. In fact, FQHC's are the primary providers under Medicaid, Medicare, SAGA and HUSKY. 30% of all Medicaid patients in Connecticut receive medical, dental and mental health services at an FQHC. In 2009, all FQHCs in the state combined cared for over **283,762 unduplicated users** at almost **350 sites** across the state. In addition, the demand for the services FQHCs provide to uninsured patients has grown between 2005 and 2009 by **375%**. Between 2006 and 2007 before the economic downturn, the volume of uninsured visits rose 10% in one year alone to 171,154 visits. Uninsured patient volume in 2009 for CHCACT's member FQHCs has grown to close to 50,000 patients and 177,601 visits.

At a time when the emphasis is on greater access to primary care services Resolution 63 is entirely consistent with the best efforts at health reform. As one of the highest performing programs funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, FQHCs enjoy bipartisan support in the United States Congress. The President's health reform proposal increases the federal investment in FQHCs. The goal is the same at the federal and state levels to increase access to care in the most appropriate setting in order to reduce the burden on more costly overburdened emergency departments.

At a time when Congress and the president are increasing the emphasis on FQHCs as a cost effective health care delivery system and when the emphasis on medical homes is increasing, Connecticut will be best served by strengthening the statewide system of care that FQHCs offer Connecticut's children and families.

On behalf of the patients and families currently served by FQHCs, we thank the Committee for endorsing and promoting a stronger FQHC infrastructure as absolutely essential to public health at a time when so many Connecticut citizens are turning to the safety net.